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September 6, 2012

TO: Each Health Deputy

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **NATIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE CHAMPION**

This is to advise you that Holly McCravey, the Director of Adult Treatment and Recovery Services for the Department of Public Health (DPH) Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC), has been chosen as the 2012 Behavioral Healthcare Champion. The award ceremony will take place on September 28, 2012, at the National Conference on Addiction Disorders and Behavioral Healthcare Leadership Summit in Orlando, Florida.

Ms. McCravey was selected for the award for her professional achievements and for her participation in her local, State, and national professional communities and organizations. As part of her award, Ms. McCravey was profiled in the 2012 July/August issue of Behavioral Health Care Magazine.

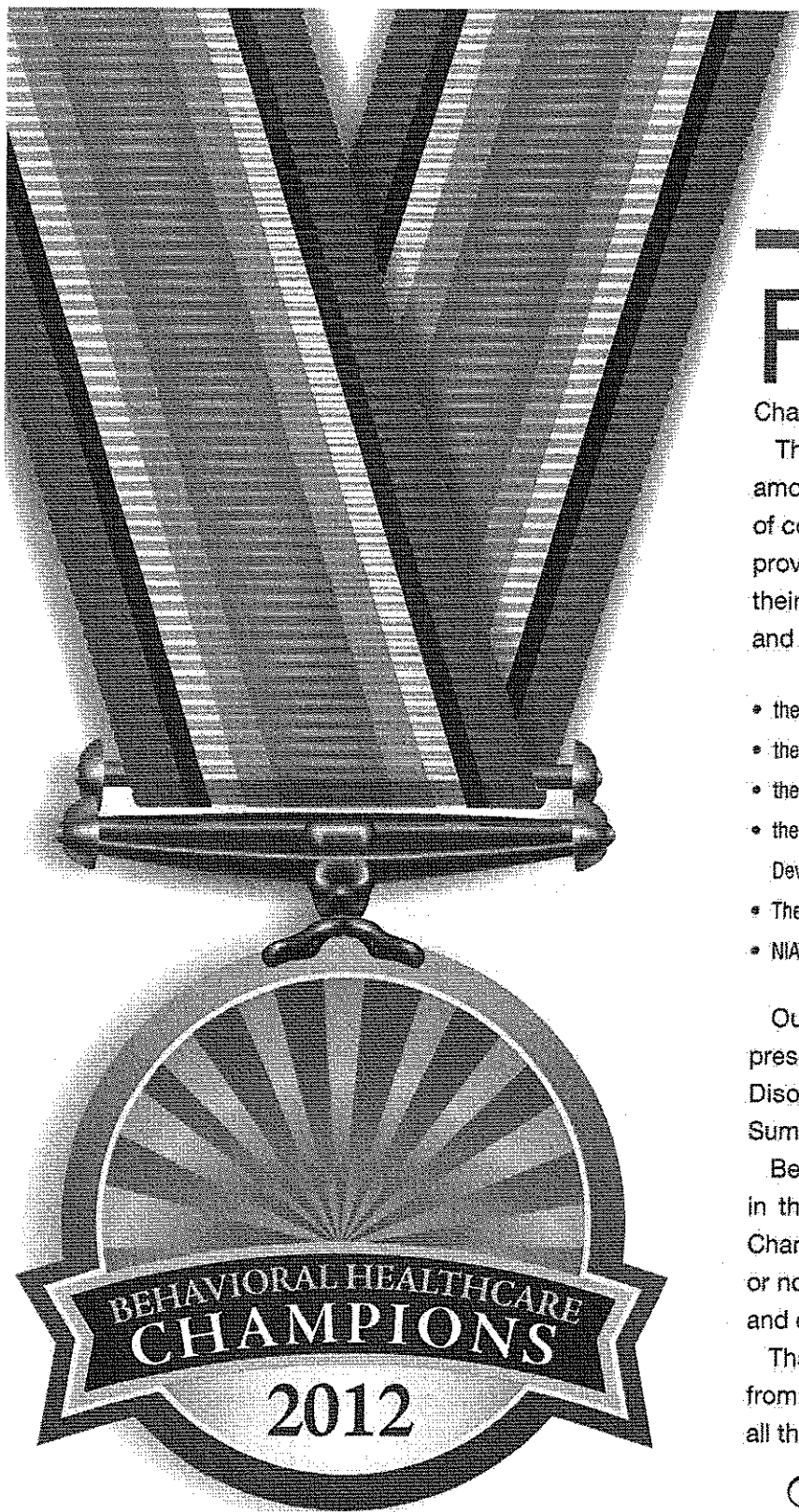
Previous to her current role, Ms. McCravey served as the Director at the Antelope Valley Rehabilitation Center. As Director, she oversaw the planning and initiation of the renovation of the facility as well as guided the programmatic transformation.

Please join me in congratulating Ms. McCravey in this professional accomplishment and in increasing national awareness of the importance of behavioral health.

JEF:lb

Attachment

c: Sheila Shima  
Richard Mason  
Jonathan E. Freedman



From among 50 nominees in all areas of behavioral healthcare, I am pleased to introduce those to be honored as 2012 *Behavioral Healthcare Champions*.

The five to be honored as Champions stand out among their peers—the CEOs and executive directors of community mental health and addiction treatment provider organizations—not only for their work, but for their participation in their professional communities and organizations, which include:

- the National Council,
- the Mental Health Corporations of America (MHCA),
- the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP),
- the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Directors (NACBHDD), and,
- The State Associations of Addiction Services (SAAS), and,
- NIATx.

Our 2012 Champions will be honored with awards presented at the National Conference on Addiction Disorders and *Behavioral Healthcare Leadership Summit* in Orlando, Florida, Sept. 28 - Oct. 2, 2012.

Before we profile the lives of the 2012 Champions in the pages that follow, let me say that for every Champion honored, there are many more—nominated or not—whose leadership, contributions, colleagues, and organizations deserve recognition as well.

Thanks to all of you, and to our 2012 Champions, from all of us—the staff of Behavioral Healthcare—for all that you do every day.

*Congratulations*

**MORE COVERAGE »**



[www.behavioral.net/champions](http://www.behavioral.net/champions)

Read the stories of current and past Champions at our website. Then, visit the websites of our champions for more information about their work. Next spring, we invite you to nominate worthy CEOs and executive directors for consideration as 2013 *Behavioral Healthcare Champions*.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE  
**LEADERSHIP**  
SUMMIT

# HOLLY McCRAVEY

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
ANTELOPE VALLEY REHABILITATION CENTERS »  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

As a young girl, Holly McCravey learned by living in a household with a family member with an addiction to alcohol that the disease could overshadow even the happiest moments of life. It instilled in her a powerful fear that someone, somehow, might find out the family's secret. But with that fear came a lifelong drive to understand this crushing disease, its roots in genetics and psychosocial factors, and its high risk for generational affliction.



As a young woman, Holly put that fear and drive to work, earning a certificate in 1982 from one of the state's first drug and alcohol counseling programs. While working as a counselor at a Driving Under the Influence offender program in Los Angeles, she came to feel that the work in the field of addiction treatment was her destiny. Soon, she went on to complete a Masters degree with a certificate in chemical dependency while working as a counselor at a private, 28-day chemical dependency treatment program for the rest of the decade.

After four years as a stay-at-home mom, Holly returned to the private treatment sector and discovered her true passion: program development and administration. After excelling as operations director for another private sector provider, doors opened at the Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center, where she launched and led its new Community Assessment Service Center, then took on and led its Via Avanta ("way forward") women's substance use disorder treatment program.

But she saw a problem: "The program was operating an old therapeutic community model, a confrontational model designed for men. It had to be redesigned to support women with addiction and co-occurring disorders. We needed a non-confrontational approach to facilitate the behavioral change needed to sustain recovery." She explains that "it is best to help women to achieve self-esteem and have confidence in themselves by providing opportunities for success and through the role-modeling of successful women. We needed to elevate them."

Doing this meant remaking the program. "We had to break down the confrontational stuff... and move in a totally new, client-centered direction toward self discovery. The result was a long-term community of treatment where you could see the progress of the women involved. It was the best experience I ever had," says Holly. That experience convinced Holly that if the system itself is an

impediment, "you need to think outside the box" and make changes. Her leadership at Via Avanta and involvement in a Los Angeles County-sponsored Network for the Improvement of Addiction Treatment (NIATx) process improvement initiative brought her to the attention of State and LA County officials. She was asked to join the LA County Department of Public Health and take on a larger project: evaluating the county's SUD treatment programs with an eye toward revitalizing them. She agreed.

Months later, in an extensive report to Department of Public Health leaders, Holly detailed a deeply troubled and underfunded treatment system. She explained that making the degree of changes necessary to revitalize county SUD treatment required "thinking so far outside the box that we needed to make a new box." Yet, the County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Public Health's Director, Jonathan Fielding, MD, and the County's incoming Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Director, John Viernes Jr., endorsed her vision. Then, they lent their support to Holly and the Antelope Valley Rehabilitation Centers (AVRCs) team in the transformation effort.

Phase one involved a difficult decision to close one of two residential sites, some 200 of the county's 500 outdated beds, in favor of a single, modern, and properly financed facility at the 135-acre AVRCs site in Acton. The center now boasts modern 170-bed men's and 70-bed women's residential programs, plus an outpatient program. Today, these are housed in modular facilities, but a new, permanent 309-bed treatment facility is on the drawing board.

Inspired by the results of pilot programs for prevention and early intervention; court-ordered treatment; co-occurring disorders; transitional age youth; women; and the criminally involved, Holly and her AVRCs colleagues continue to develop more specialized treatment options. "We've come to realize that a range of programs, aimed at special populations, ought to be the norm for treatment, not just for small-scale pilot studies," she notes.

The diversity of AVRCs programs is complemented by a range of integrated treatment approaches: evidence-based practices utilizing the Matrix Model, CBT, CBT mindfulness, motivational interviewing and 12-step facilitation; medication assisted treatment (Vivitrol); onsite primary care and mental health programs; and a telepsychiatry consultation program with UCLA.

Offering so many services is difficult, but essential. "The uninsured residents of Los Angeles County deserve access to quality and effective substance use disorder treatment. This population often is so broken that there are no barriers and no illusions that stand in the way of treatment and recovery. They have an extraordinary ability to connect with the truth and begin their unique path to recovery."

Today, with mental health funding from the Proposition 63 "millionaire's tax" and impetus from Assembly Bill 109's mandate to "redirect" criminally involved persons from incarceration into parole, probation, or court-ordered treatment, California is forcing down old departmental silos. Lawmakers are demanding that State, County, and community resources work together on more effective and integrated justice and treatment alternatives. This means that program employees at the AVRC's will play an increasingly important role in state and local policy, a role that they're now much better prepared to fill.

**NOTE:** Holly was recently promoted to Acting Program Administrator for Adult Treatment and Recovery Services for the LA County Department of Public Health.

**AND SOMETIMES, YOU NEED TO MAKE A NEW BOX."**